

1996 Hall of Fame Inductee

Donald N. McDowell

Donald N. McDowell was born and raised on a livestock farm near Montello, Wisconsin. He attended Westfield High School and joined the FFA in 1930, becoming a charter member of the National FFA. He received his American Farmer Degree in 1935 and also served as a Wisconsin State FFA Officer. Donald graduated from the UW College of Agriculture in 1938 with a degree in Agriculture and Education.

Donald taught high school vocational agriculture at Spring Green and Waukesha High Schools. He joined the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture in 1947 as chief of the Administration Division. From 1950-69 he served as Wisconsin's Secretary of Agriculture. During that time, he was President of the Midwest Association of State Departments of Agriculture, 1953 and 1965 and President of the national Association of State Departments of Agriculture in 1958. Don was appointed by the President of the United States in July of 1970 to serve on the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education and was reappointed in 1973 and 1976.

From 1969 to 1979, Don served as the Executive Director of the National FFA Foundation Sponsoring Committee. In 1969, individual and industry donors invested \$250,000 in the foundation. Ten years later the Foundation backed this great youth movement with over \$1,000,000 in funds. This could not have been accomplished without the untiring leadership and motivational enthusiasm of "Mr. FFA Foundation," Don McDowell.

Through the years, Don has received numerous honors, awards and citations, including the Honorary State and American FFA Degrees, Friend of 4-H Award, American Vocational Association "Award of Merit," FFA VIP Citation, and the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Distinguished Service Award. Don and his wife Ardith have five children, 2 boys and 3 girls who are all active in church, 4-h and other youth activities. They have 10 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.